Interesting in the rise of the Gulag system—experiences, management, Soviet leaders, etc?

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Please feel free to use, but don’t distribute without crediting the work I did to put it together. If you want to learn more or talk about issues in the materials, feel free to contact me—I love the subject. I come at it from the point of view of a business school management professor who is interested not only in the history, but the management/strategic/entrepreneurship/leadership/human lessons embedded in these stories.

Here’s a very out of date personal bibliography. Some are annotated with brief personal notes and some publisher/seller descriptions. Need to add/revise with full listing of what I have, but it’ll give you a sense of what’s out there. Some of the sources in here are the basis for a research project I am working on about management lessons from the Gulag.

Also need to add the others to obtain which are id’d in my marked bibs/footnotes from individual books. Some pulled from polar bib if they ref Siberia in relevant way.

Siberia Gulag Stalin Bibliography


Aksyonov, Vassily. 1985. The Burn (Julia’s old friend/GMU prof). He’s the daughter of Evgenia Ginzburg. Novelized autobiography/difficult read. But, there are various references that make sense once you read his mom’s books and know the family history in Magadan. Fascinating links. I remember in 2009 when she said he had just died, sad time/loss for her.

Albanov, Valerian. 1917 (Russian). In the Land of White Death. First Eng trans 2001, pub. by Modern Library. Albanov’s memoir re St. Anna disaster in Siberian Arctic. The second edition of the ML translation solves a major mystery. Contains excerpts from the newly discovered diary of Alexander Konrad (the other survivor), and shows he was one of the thieves/deserters Albanov mentions but does not name! Plus, the logbook from the St. Anna inspired and was fictionalized in Veniamin Kaverin’s Two Captains.


GET

His dad was high-ranking, killed in 1937 purge. Angry, bitterly satirical, great analysis of Stalin’s rise: “how did he do it?, Joseph the Builder, The Mountain Eagle, in our time” are the main sections. Angry angry angry, rips Stalin apart. Stalin titles are parodies like Maximoff’s Emperor Joseph the First.


NKVD prisoner, becomes KGB expert on prison tattoos (see his 3 vol series Russian Criminal Tattoo), does drawings of atrocities he sees and learns about, hides them for years til he can publish them. Horrific. I think he was a tormented and terribly brave man. He died in 2005—not sure if he or his widow planned the publication of these as posthumous?

Memoir of Polish youth who crosses Soviet border to avoid Germans, gets sent to Kolyma for five years, released at war’s end due brother’s efforts.


Paperback 2003, Carroll and Graf.
Memoir (recorded/edited) of Clemens Forell, German soldier sentenced in 1945 to 25 years. Spends four years, most at far end of Chukchi Peninsula (Anadyr) by Bering Strait. Escapes, spends three years crossing USSR to Iran to Germany, arriving home at Christmas. One of the very few successful escapes, and from the hardest place. Made into a German movie.

GET

Memoir of 17-year-old shipped off at end of WWII for ten years.

Well-researched study of American and European ships bought and put into service on the Vladivostok-Magadan route. Started out as a couple of simple questions posed by a naval consultant and ended up with a book. Where the ships came from, uses, the experience of prisoners, American involvement, etc.


GET

GET 1st ed w jacket! Dripping blood on dustjacket. Striking.
Brunovsky, Vladimir. 1931. Methods of the OGPU
Check to see if there’s a reprint

Memoir listed in Orr.


GET
Online pdf = https://archive.org/details/1929InTheClutchesOfTheTchekaBorisCederholmReduced

How they handled it-mentally, practically, how treated, rehabilitation focus, etc. Interview w Bukharin daughter, many others.

His books were pre-collapse, so more limited archival than later ones. Example of great research when sources are scarce.

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Chritchlow, Donald and Critchlow, Agnieszka (eds). 2002. Enemies of the State: Personal Stories from the Gulag. Excerpts from well-known prisoner memoirs about Gulag-type systems in totalitarian states: USSR/Siberia, Romania, China, etc.
GET

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   Memoir of 22 yo American who grew up mostly in Russia, works in 1948 in US Embassy, arrested, released from camps in 1956, allowed to leave USSR in 1971 for America.


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   Book site: Reporter’s account of the 1931 Polar flight of the airship Graf Zeppelin. The Graf Zeppelin flew under the command of Dr. Hugo Eckner who had gained world renown by commanding the 1929 around the world flight of the Graf Zeppelin. The passenger list was an international who’s who of polar and aerial exploration, including Lincoln Ellsworth who had flown with Amundsen to 88ºN in 1925 and on the 1926 Norge transpolar flight. The flight departed from the Zeppelin base at Friedrichshafen, Germany and returned 8 days later after surveying the Russian polar island groups in the Arctic Ocean. The flight included a brief water landing at Hooker Island in a Russian icebreaker. It was the first aerial survey and mapping of Russian island groups in the Arctic Ocean and the first air-sea exchange of mail in the far north.


✓ Getty, J. Arch and Naumov, Oleg V. 2008. *Yezhov: The Rise of Stalin’s “Iron Fist”*. Yale University Press.  Interesting for focus not only on bio/politicking, but bureaucratic skills—how he did things/rose/fell. Lots of archival refs


   Cross-check original dates to see timeline of first and second volume—is there really a 14 year break between the two pubs??

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OUCH! Sidenote: The New Republic did a review of Gliksman in 1948. See the doubting/scorn of this brief review, which seems to discount the steady series of escapee horror stories. James Roy Newman was a mathematician and lawyer, and served in USG in/after WWII re diplomacy/state dept/atomic energy/etc. He missed the mark in this review I think, trivializing the honest reporting of a man’s experiences. The tone of his full review of the three books makes him seem somewhat of a snot. Plus, someone—Newman or an editor—got the Koriakov title wrong, adding “back” to the end of the title.

Lenin: A Biography, by David Shub (Doubleday and Company; $5). I’ll Never Go Back: A Red Army Officer Talks Back, by Mikhail Koriakov (E.P. Dutton; $3). Tell the West, by Jerzy Gliksman (The Gresham Press; $3.75). Of these three books, only one, David Shub’s biography of Lenin, is a useful contribution to an understanding of Russia and the Russians. The other two are not unfamiliar specimens. Each is an undocumented, uncorroborated narrative of harrowing personal experiences in the Soviet Union. Neither has any particular literary, autobiographical or historical merit. Both are frankly propagandistic denunciations of certain phases of life under the Soviet regime.”

[last 3 sentences above: Newman is an ass]


Cost of running it, rewards vs punishments, etc. bureaucratic/mgmt. difficulties/decisions

English translation of the celebratory volume Belomorkanal about the canal. Heroic, Stalinist ode to re-forging of political prisoners—kulaks, wreckers, and saboteurs. Mostly crap, hides reality. As Gulag grows, writing like this does not continue. First and only book of its kind.

Large format photo/travelogue.


 ✓ Herling, Gustaw. 1986. (orig ed 1951). *A World Apart*. New York: Penguin. Memoir of Polish POW sent in 1940 to Gulag for 2 years, freed in the Polish amnesty to fight. Starts with great quote from Dostoevsky: “Here there is a world apart, unlike everything else, with laws of its own, its own manners and customs, and here is the house of the living dead—life as nowhere else and a people apart. It is this corner apart that I am going to describe.”

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 ✓ Kapuscinski, Ryszard. 1994. *Imperium*. About his travels over many decades through USSR and its later collapsing empire, esp focus on 89-93.


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✓ Maximoff, Grigorii Petrovich. 1940. The Guillotine at Work, Vols I and II. Chicago: Alexander Berkman Fund. Have 1975 Revisionist Press reprint of both volumes, need 1st ed. Lots of procedural info on how Lenin/Stalin create basis for system, turning revolution into state capitalism with terror and no dissent. Maximoff was an Anarchist. Well-documented, extremely passionate/angry in the writing, e.g. “Emperor Joseph the First” haha—see Antonov-Ovsyenko for similar titles. Prob inspired by Stalin’s propaganda—Stalin, friend/father/etc of the…etc. wise, children, builder, etc. Look up history of celebratory Stalin phrases, also Lenin.

✓ McCannon, John. 1998. Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939. New York: Oxford University Press. Alibris: Red Arctic tells the history of Stalinist Russia's massive campaign to explore and develop its Northern territories during the 1930s. McCannon tells the dramatic stories of the polar expeditions - conducted by foot, ship, and plane - which were the pride of Stalinist Russia, to expose the reality behind them: chaotic blunders, bureaucratic competition, and the eventual rise of the GULAG as the dominant force in the North. Dramatic stories of the first polar explorations, the record-breaking flights and rescues by both foot and ice-breaker. First examination of the Stalinist creation of the myth of the arctic in the face of the rise of the GULAG.

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Melgunov, Serge. P. 1924 *Red Terror in Russia*. 1st ed in 24, there’s a Hyperion reprint from 1975.


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✓ Orr, Charles. 1951. *Stalin’s Slave Camps: An indictment of modern slavery*. Brussels, Belgium: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. One of the earliest studies, published two years before Stalin’s death. A bit of a polemic, but a surprising amount of data, given the date. Cover has a map of camps and railroads. Interesting errors re the railroads, like one from Tyndinskiy (Tynda) to Magadan and northeast to Anadyr. Trans-Sib is only partial, and is labeled Baykal Amur. BAM (which wasn’t built) is labeled Tayshet-Komsomolsk. Last page has biblio of escapee memoirs, which are ref’d in my biblio. There are six, some of which I have. Also lists a couple of AFL and other studies.
GET


✓ Raven, Chris and Raven, Simon. 2006. The Linger Longer: Driving the Trans-Siberian. UK: Samosir Books

My take: dirty, funny, insightful.

Back cover: Ever had the desire to simply jump in the car and keep driving, to wave goodbye to routine and commitment, to drive into the unknown with your arm out of the window hungry for adventure? Well, that is precisely what twin brothers and UK authors, Simon Raven and Chris Raven decided to do whilst stacking boxes of frozen oven chips in a minus 30°C freezer. With a squeaky foot pump and an SAS Survival Guide, the brothers fired up their rusty £300 Ford Sierra and headed east. Not being petrol heads and having very little knowledge of the internal combustion engine, with luck they hoped to reach Poland and maybe even the Baltic State of Estonia - where lived, according to legend, the most beautiful girls on the planet.

After driving for six weeks and clocking up over 11,000 miles, quite literally living in the car, they miraculously arrived in the Far Eastern city of Vladivostok in Siberia on the Sea of Japan. What they had in fact done was to drive the entire length of the amazing new Amur Highway before it was finished, which crosses Russia in a 6,200 mile swath of cracked tarmac and potholes. Along the way our trusty heroes drink vodka with Chechen criminals, escape highway robbery, trade banana flavoured condoms with Russian cops, meet the eccentric and plain weird at truck stops in darkest Siberia, endure torturous road conditions and have a race to the finish with the Germans. Surviving this journey by the skin of their teeth, the brothers are forced to confront their worst fears in this toe-curling comedy that is both gripping and surreal.


My take: neat book, but some of it seems quite fabricated out of thin air.

Ebay/Amazon: Cavalry officer Slavomir Rawicz was captured by the Red Army in 1939 during the German-Soviet partition of Poland and was sent to the Siberian Gulag along with other captive Poles, Finns, Ukranians, Czechs, Greeks, and even a few English, French, and American unfortunates who had been caught up in the fighting. A year later, he and six comrades from various countries escaped from a labor camp in Yakutsk and made their way, on
foot, thousands of miles south to British India, where Rawicz reenlisted in the Polish army and fought against
the Germans. The Long Walk recounts that adventure, which is surely one of the most curious treks in history.
Reviewer: C. Beta from Freeview
There are classics and then there are _classics_. This memoir is in the second group, the kind of book that
stands apart from those that would claim to be its peers by virtue of its singular vision. The opening pages
are right out of Solzhenitsyn, in fact take place in the same prison that he almost lovingly calls the "Big Lubyanka"
in The Gulag Archipelago. But this is not Solzhenitsyn with his grace and humor and satire and righteous anger
recollecting the soul-altering experiences that ironically made him into the great poet of the dismal 20th
century. Instead, Rawicz is more of an Everyman, the ordinary Polish cavalry officer trapped without cause
within the Soviet penal system. His is not the desire to write the history of the Soviet Union (something
Solzhenitsyn eventually does indirectly with the Gulag), but rather the more basic impulse just to be free. Even
if that means the travails of a year-long journey on foot through one hardship after another, freedom will not be
denied him.
There are mysteries aplenty in this book. How can Rawicz recall the details and dialog that he does years after
the fact? Who is the unnamed American who accompanies Rawicz and the others on the walk and what was he
really doing in the Soviet Union? Why did Rawicz lose contact with all his boon companions after the war? The
reader can be forgiven for suspecting that there are other things at work here below the text, that something was
lost or altered in the transformation from memory to an English that he learned only later when living in
England.
But still, this is a magnificent book. I've given numerous copies to friends and strangers. Walkers and hikers in
particular should enjoy this story, for beneath the horrors of starvation and death there lies the secret joy of a
truly open-ended walk, epic in length, outside and alive and free.

Another big recent bio, like Montefiore (2003). Focus on the group, dynamics, history.
Demise of writers/artists, starting p. 168.


Fictional murder mystery: "While on a routine patrol, RCMP Staff Sergeant Boychuk discovers a body. The Sergeant knows he's dealing with a murder, even though the body in question has been frozen in Arctic ice for over one hundred years..."


GET
Solonevich, I., 1938. Russia in Chains: A Record of Unspeakable Suffering. London: Williams and Norgate Ltd.. (2 volumes)


✓ Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. The Gulag Archipelago. Vols I-III.


GET

Follow up to his wife’s book on their escape from their Siberia sentence across border to Finland. This one has pics of them.

**GET**


Disappearance of most Americans that emigrated to USSR in 20s and 30s.

Forced re-settlement, mostly in Northern Territory, Siberia, and Urals, but also in Kazakhstan and Far East.

Fictional play about Mom’s ancestor Moritz and his imprisonment in and escape from Siberia. First public singing of The Star Spangled Banner was during intermission of the play in Baltimore.

Inc. some from former Soviet republics. Like Orizio’s Talk of the Devil but lacking most of the personal interviews.


Fun fictional thriller about murder and oil, set in Markovo, in Chukotka Oblast.

Memoir of 27 yo ethnic Pole who grew up in Siberia and Warsaw, arrested in 39, sent to Arctic camps near Barents Sea, freed in the ’41 Polish amnesty.

**GET**

Zoretic, Josip. 2007. *Goli Otok—Hell in the Adriatic.* Day-to-day memoir of prisoner on Yugoslavia’s island labor camp, just south of Krk!